



Walk 18. Countisbury and Foreland Point.

- 3.2 miles, ascents and descents of 300 metres. 1 hour 40 minutes continuous walking, allow 2½ hours.

Terrain: Paths and tracks. ! The cliff path from Foreland Point is narrow and exposed above a 200m drop on to a rocky shore. It requires surefootedness and a head for heights, and it should only be used in good weather: it can be bypassed using the official coast path. A stick or pair of poles is useful here.

Access: The walk starts from Countisbury (SS 747 496, near EX35 6NE), but the car park belongs to the Blue Ball inn: only park there if you are using the inn. An alternative car park is less than half a mile eastwards along the A39, at Barna Barrow (SS 793 496; adds 0.8 miles and 20m of ascent). The Exmoor Coaster bus from Minehead or Watchet to Lynmouth stops outside the inn.

Map: Croydecycle 04 Lynton, Lynmouth & Doone Valley or Coast Path Map 1 Exmoor, or OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Pub at Countisbury, more options in nearby Lynmouth.

THIS SHORT WALK EXPLORES ONE OF EXMOOR'S MOST PRECIPITOUS HEADLANDS, Foreland Point. The narrow cliff path is only recommended for confident, surefooted walkers and only in good weather, but the views are hardly less good if you return from the Point and take the official Coast Path. The walk combines easily with walk 17 for an eight-mile figure-of-eight walk from Lynmouth.

Starting at Countisbury, find a no through road next to the pub car park, signposted to Countisbury Church. Continue through a gate into the churchyard, leaving it through the gate behind the church. Now head diagonally right to a stone-walled field corner. There is a view to Lynton and Lynmouth down to the left. Take the uphill path towards the radio mast on Butter Hill: at the top you will have views in all directions (10mins, [1]). (From the Barna Barrow car park, head away from the main road and bear left so that you follow the field boundary. In about five minutes head diagonally right on a path across the moorland to the Butter Hill radio mast).

Counting anticlockwise, take the second, narrower path off the hilltop (if you have started from Barna Barrow this will be the third path). In just over a minute come to a drystone wall with a stone trough in front of it. Turn right and walk alongside the wall for a minute or two, then bear slightly right to follow a well-defined path ahead. When the path forks, head left. Arrive at a narrow tarmac road and turn left; it snakes steeply downhill to your destination, the Foreland Point lighthouse. After the third sharp bend, there is a wide oxbow (35mins,

[2]). Cross a small bridge, noting the path to the left on its far side. Pass a National Trust bothy. The road soon runs out at a turning area where there is a viewpoint (50mins, [3]): the lighthouse is to the left, to the right you have views along the coast to Bossington Hill and Hurlstone Point, and directly ahead across the Bristol Channel is Porthcawl.

Starting to retrace your steps, the cliff path is immediately on the right with a suitable warning notice and 'danger' sign. Don't attempt it in poor weather or if you are uncomfortable with narrow tracks above steep drops, but instead return almost to the bridge and turn right there to follow the official

coast path. Otherwise make sure you have nothing that could trip you up or fall out of your pack, and head upwards. The route is straightforward but very narrow and uneven with loose shale at various points, and you will need to concentrate on your footing for the best part of half a mile. The two paths come together at a sloping grassy plain (1hr20mins, [4]). Start to head towards the radio mast, then follow the coast path around to the right. You will soon see the top of Countisbury church tower ahead. Head towards the church, go through the churchyard, then down a lane back to Countisbury (for Barna Barrow, start heading for the church but turn left to walk around the field boundary and rejoin your outward route). If you are continuing on to walk 17, turn left on the road at Countisbury then right on the footpath marked to Watersmeet via Trilly Ridge.

Longer walk: Lynmouth, Foreland Point and Watersmeet (● 8 miles, ascents and descents of 720 metres). This walk can be combined with **walk 17**, starting either at Lynmouth or Countisbury. The linking instructions are in the descriptions for both walks.

